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ABSTRACT

A social learning model of the mentoring process is presented that features bicultural competence and effective communication. The model suggests how mentors can cooperate with families and teachers in the promotion of high-risk minority children's bicultural competence. Mentoring is a term increasingly applied to describe relationships between successful minority adults and high-risk minority youth. Successful mentors appear to promote bicultural competence in high-risk minority youth through effective communication. In the model, it is assumed that effective communication is a universal human process, and that coping and competence depend on effective communication. Effective family communication promotes competence among all children in their indigenous cultures, and promotes bicultural competence for minority children who must cope with two cultures. Bicultural, and even multicultural, competence is empowering because it provides the means to communicate in various social contexts. Effective communication can be learned, and is, in fact, a requirement for all helping relationships. Biculturally competent mentors are more likely to help problem families and children learn effective communication. Ways of measuring communication and competence are discussed, and suggestions are made for establishing mentoring programs based on the features of the model. (SLD)

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Mentoring Program Structures for Young Minority Males

Mentors for High-Risk Minority Children: Toward Bicultural Competence

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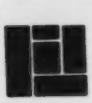

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Mentors for High-Risk Minority Children: Toward Bicultural Competence

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This paper presents a social-learning model of the mentoring process. Bicultural competence and effective communication are essential features of this model. The paper suggests how mentors can cooperate with families and teachers in the promotion of high-risk minority children's bicultural competence.

What is mentoring? Mentoring, in general terms, refers to the efforts of an experienced individual to transmit wisdom and guidance to a protege. In the following example, an inner-city elementary-school teacher trained to teach science, attempts to mentor both her own students and other teachers at her school. "Ms. Powell, an animated 39-year-old teacher is P.S.7's science mentor. A Harlem resident, she sees herself as a role model for neighborhood kids and urges them to get back to school when she sees them hanging around on the streets. She stocks her room with fish, animals, and plants that she figures her students don't see at home. On a Wednesday morning, Ms. Powell packs 25 snails in a bowl, grabs handfuls of magnifying glasses and plastic balances, and heads off to show third-grade teacher Cynthia Aquart what she has learned about teaching science" ("U.S. Aims," 1990).

As in the above example, mentoring is increasingly applied to describe relationships between successful minority adults and high-risk, minority youth. Such mentoring relationships might be spontaneous or they might be arranged (as the Big Brothers organization has typically done). The general purpose of mentoring

is to improve the youngster's chances of success at school and work and to diminish the likelihood of bad life outcomes frequently encountered in the inner city: welfare dependency, teen pregnancy, school drop-out, incarceration, psychiatric hospitalization, premature death (Ferguson, 1990; Mincy & Wiener, 1990).

Who can be mentors? Mentors for high-risk, minority youth might be paraprofessional or professional (such as a social worker employed in a community youth program); they might volunteer or be paid. Mentors might work in: conventional programs (e.g., Big Brothers); multi-faceted youth programs with educational, vocational, religious, and mentoring components; or, community programs with an exclusive focus on mentoring (such as those now under discussion at the Urban Institute). Mentors might also participate in a program combining community-based mentoring with behavioral prevention strategies (such as the Classroom Achievement System; Family Skills Training; Peer Communication Training) (Blechman, 1985; Blechman, Prinz, & Dumas, 1990).

What is the purpose of mentoring? Successful mentors appear to promote bicultural competence in high-risk minority youth via effective communication. This paper's recommendations are intended to increase the chances that the protege evidently increases in bicultural competence as a direct result of mentoring.

What interferes with mentoring's success? Mentoring, as this continuation of the above example suggests, is not inevitably

successful. ""Ms. Powell figures the best help she can offer as a mentor is getting teachers used to hands-on activities. She passes out the snails. The kids poke and weigh the mollusks, and jot down observations. As the lesson progresses and the kids get more excited and noisy, Ms. Aquart becomes uneasy, prowling the room and finally shutting off the lights to quiet them. Before they have a chance to finish weighing the snails, she tells Ms. Powell the experiment is over. The children must get ready for gym, Ms. Aquart says. Ms Powell asks her to complete the experiment later in the days; she demurs. Back in her own classroom, the usually effervescent Ms. Powell is dejected: "When I saw what was going on, I said, 'Uh, oh.'" There was too much mess and noise to suit Ms. Aquart, she realizes."" ("U.S. Aims," 1990).

The mentor's success, in the above example, was obstructed by difficulties in communication with the protege teacher. In particular, there were shortcomings in the information exchange component of communication (informing the protege about the noise, and mess, and time required for a successful science lesson) and in the behavior management component of communication (persuading the protege to allow the mentor to supervise all aspects of the science lesson). In the model presented below, I argue that successful mentoring always requires the capacity to communicate effectively with the protege.

<u>Social Learning of Bicultural Competence</u>

Discussions of mentoring have not yet been integrated with general behavioral science theory and research methods. As a result, key questions have not been addressed including: "Why does mentoring work?" And, "When does mentoring work?"

This section of the paper presents a social-learning model describing how bicultural competence might be promoted via mentoring. The model involves basic assumptions about the process of communication between mentor, protege, and protege's family. These assumptions follow from my past clinical research with families and children, inner-city, urban, and suburban. In addition, these assumptions are informed by my current involvement (with Ron Prinz and Jean Dumas) in the design and evaluation of a preventive intervention strategy for minority youth with chronic conduct problems. Note that the model and its component assumptions are hypothetical and require empirical confirmation via scientifically rigorous research.

Effective communication is a universal human process. The model's first assumption is that effective communication is a universal human process characterized by success at the three core components of communication: information exchange, behavior management, and problem solving (Blechman, 1990a, 1990b). Communication is effective whenever two or more people are able to send and receive each other's messages accurately (information exchange), to reciprocally influence one another's behavior

(behavior management), and to solve problems in a mutually satisfactory manner (problem solving).

The content of messages exchanged, the direction in which behavior is influenced, the problems identified, and the solutions accepted, differ markedly between subcultures and cultures. In the inner-city, parents may consider their behavior influence successful if their children come home straight from school, do their homework, and stay in the apartment until bedtime. In the suburbs, parents are more likely to consider their behavior influence successful if children spend their after-school hours with peers, do homework at the library, and engage in sports at the gym or on the athletic field. Regardless of these cultural differences, the core components of effective communication have the same functional impact on the parent-child relationship: information is exchanged, behavior is influenced, problems are solved.

Coping and competence depend upon effective communication. The model's second assumption is that the quality of family communication is a critical determinant of any child's chances for becoming a competent adult (Blechman, Wills, & Adler, in press). Effective family communication may be more essential for children whose families cannot provide material help and social status than for privileged children. The way in which family members routinely exchange information, influence each other's behavior, and solve

mutual problems directly determines the child's acquisition of key coping skills (for managing emotions, reinforcers, and challenges) and indirectly determines the child's subsequent affective, social, and achievement competence.

Family communication appears to be a significant psychological process through which many demographic marker variables exert effects on child competence (Blechman, 1982). Marker variables such as the number of parents who raise a child, parents' income, parents' education, parents' occupational prestige, the family's ethnicity, race, and religion often provide accurate statistical information about the future prospects of large numbers of children. These marker variables, in and of themselves, are not responsible for an individual child's future chances. These marker variables are often correlated with psychologically meaningful variables (such as family communication) which do have direct impact on current socialization of a child and that child's future chances of success.

Parent education is a marker variable generally found to be correlated with the quality of family communication. College-educated parents are prepared to answer their two-year-old's "why" questions just as teachers will when the child enters school. In contrast, high-school drop-out parents are poorly prepared to answer their two-year-old's questions in a manner that optimizes the child's school entry. Thus, via effective family communication,

the marker variable of parent education influences the child's chances of achievement competence.

Marker variables, however, are imperfectly correlated with family communication; some educated parents are ineffective at communication, some uneducated parents are effective at communication. This means that the most accurate statistical prediction of an individual child's chances for future achievement competence must take into account both parent education and the quality of family communication. Furthermore, since parent education is less amenable to change via psychosocial interventions than is family communication, it seems advisable to direct intervention efforts at communication, keeping in mind that marker variables such as parent education can affect receptivity to particular types of intervention.

Effective communication promotes bicultural competence. The model's third basic assumption is that effective family communication promotes competence among all children in their respective, indigenous cultures (Blechman & McEnroe, 1985; Blechman, McEnroe, Carella, & Audette, 1986; Blechman, Tinsley, Carella, & McEnroe, 1985). Among minority children who survive by coping in their indigenous culture and thrive by (in addition) coping in the majority culture, effective family communication promotes bicultural competence.

For survival, minority children must be competent in their own

subcultures. Communication styles differ predictably between ethnic, racial, and social-class subcultures. Individuals born into a subculture, yet unfamiliar with normative styles of communication modes might as well be outsiders; they run the risk of psychological alienation, social ostracism, and even physical harm. Children raised in the inner-city depend upon effective "street-smart" communication for their physical, social, and psychological survival.

In street-smart communication, children exposed to numerous dangers take an offensive stance signalling their capacity to care for themselves and cautioning others against attacking them. Street-smart children practice offensive communication in games which test players' ability to invent (and withstand) insults (e.g., "doing the dozens"). Used effectively, street-wise communication allows children to achieve universally important goals: information exchange, behavior management, problem solving. When street-smart communication is effective, others receive the child's message, "I'm tough, don't mess with me or you'll be sorry." When street-smart communication is effective, others are influenced by the child's message and, indeed, do not harm the child. When street-smart communication is effective, two "tough" children can form an alliance for mutual self-defense. Street-smart communication can also be used ineffectively. When this happens, the child is accepted as an insider by the group, but fails at

self-protection. For example, the "I'm tough" message is misread by others as a challenge to do battle, resulting in escalating, destructive physical combat.

Where do children learn to be effective at street-smart communication so that they survive in a dangerous urban environment? Are children effective at street-smart communication most likely to become effective at communication in the majority culture as well, demonstrating bicultural competence? Is effective family communication a major contributor to children's bicultural competence? Answers to these questions based on credible scientific data are unavailable. At best, we can hypothesize that a family effective at communication does promote children's bicultural competence.

Bicultural competence is empowering. A fourth assumption is that bicultural (and at times multicultural) competence is empowering for anyone. The benefits to members of disadvantaged minorities from bicultural competence are particularly substantial. Members of disadvantaged groups, weak in economic and social power, increase their power via bicultural competence. The inner-city child with bicultural competence uses street-wise communication at home and in the neighborhood and middle-class communication at school (and later at work) to gain access to valued advantages not available to youth whose competence is limited to the inner-city milieu.

Bicultural competence should not be confused with assimilation or with rejection of the culture of origin. Bicultural competence connotes the capacity to operate with ease in two social contexts while maintaining a sense of pride in one's own origins and distinctive identity. The most disadvantaged people are those who cannot fully assimilate into the powerful majority because they look different, have a physical deformity, black skin, oriental features, or female gender. For these coerced minorities, bicultural competence is the only route to empowerment. Thus, biculturally competent women, for example, can talk and act like members of the male culture when they choose and like members of the female culture when they choose (Blechman, 1984b).

Effective communication can be learned. A fifth assumption is that families can learn to become more effective at communication, thereby improving their children's chances for current and future competence (Blechman, 1984a; Blechman, 1990; Blechman, et al., 1981; Blechman, Kotanchik, & Taylor, 1981; Blechman, Taylor, & Schrader, 1981; Dumas, Blechman, & Prinz, (In press). When a multi-problem family is too disorganized to improve its process of familial communication, children can still learn more effective communication. A mentor might assist the entire family, or the children alone, toward the goal of better communication.

The processes by which communication can be learned from a mentor are subsumed under social-learning theory and include:

modeling, instruction, rehearsal, and reinforcement. In modeling, the mentor teaches effective communication by example, using such communication in all exchanges with parents and children. In instruction, the mentor teaches effective communication by explaining how to exchange information, influence behavior, and solve problems and by prompting the protege to follow instructions. In rehearsal, the protege practices effective communication by imitating the mentor. In reinforcement, the mentor strengthens the protege's performance skills by praising effective communication and paying little attention to ineffective communication.

Effective communication is a requirement for all helping relationships. A sixth assumption is that families and children ineffective at communication can only be extended help by individuals exquisitely skilled at communication. Socially insular families are literally cut off from sources of useful advice and help by their communication deficits. The helper, paraprofessional or professional, must be versed in the basics of effective communication: information exchange, behavior management, and problem solving. They must use these skills in every encounter with the needy family. Expert helpers with years of training in a profession (e.g., pediatrics, family law), good intentions, and impoverished communication skills find that one needy family after another is closed to their expert advice. Under these circumstances, the term "resistance" is usually applied to blame

the multi-problem family for the expert's communication deficits.

A paraprofessional helper who relies solely on a healing relationship to provide help, has no choice but to be skilled at communication with adult family members and children. While some assume that effective communication is insured by matching a high-risk, inner-city youngster with a same-race, same-gender mentor, evidence supporting this assumption appears unavailable. Given the centrality of effective communication to the mentor-protege relationship, communication skills should be weighted heavily during the screening, training, and supervision of mentors.

Once screening has identified a mentor skilled at communication, careful training and supervision in mentor-protege communication should begin. Just because an athlete is skilled at playing basketball, there is no guarantee that the athlete will be able to teach awkward, unathletic youth to play basketball proficiently. Just because a mentor is skilled at communication in the minority and dominant cultures, there is no guarantee that the mentor will be able to improve the communication of an angry, alienated youth.

Multi-problem families and their children are most likely to learn effective communication from biculturally competent mentors. A final assumption is that multi-problem families, children and parents, are most likely to learn effective communication from a biculturally competent mentor skilled at effective communication.

While multi-problem families can, in principle, learn effective communication from any helper skilled at communication, the biculturally competent mentor has a particular advantage. The biculturally competent mentor understands the difficulties of straddling two cultures and the fears about change that confront the multi-problem family. Thus, the biculturally competent mentor has particularly high credibility with parents in the multi-problem family. In addition, the biculturally competent mentor is able to engage in the communication task of information exchange with multi-problem families in ways that are likely to enhance trust, receptivity to new information, and engagement in change and learning of new skills.

Current discussions of mentoring generally focus on the needs of high-risk children. The parents of these children, mostly single mothers, are equally in need of the help that competent mentors can give. Some might argue that single mothers, in charge of multi-problem families, are more in need of mentoring than any one of their children. Without such help, single mothers may be trapped into subverting the mentor-protege relationship. With such help, the single mother may be better prepared to nurture the protege and other sibs. The mentor who ignores the single mother's needs risks jeopardizing the relationship with the protege, or alienating the protege from the family. The mentor who inexpertly attempts to help the single mother risks establishing inappropriate relationships

with mother and protege. A mentor who is selected for effective communication skills, and carefully supervised and trained to use effective communication with the protege and family, is best prepared for these challenges.

If bicultural competence is the goal for high-risk minority children, than a mentor who is already biculturally competent and effective at communication, is the most likely route to this goal. This mentor can, via effective communication with the protege, provide an example of the rewards of bicultural competence, including high self-esteem and acceptance in the minority and majority communities. In the relationship with the mentor, the protege can observe the mentor's skills and the consequences of those skills, can try out similar skillful behavior, and directly experience rewarding consequences. Through a social-learning process, proteges can gradually match their performance with their mentors'. In fact, successful social learning probably cannot take place unless the mentor is biculturally competent and effective at communication.

Definition and Measurement

Assumptions of a social-learning model concerned with the mentoring process have just been presented. This section presents definitions and methods of measurement for key terms in the model.

High-risk youth. High-risk children and adolescents live in neighborhoods characterized by high crime rates, unemployment,

school drop out, teen pregnancy, and welfare dependency. Their families, often headed by single mothers, have poverty-level income and multiple, chronic psychosocial problems. The multi-problem family contends with challenges such as parental substance abuse, criminality, and psychiatric disabilities. Youth growing up in multi-problem families are simultaneously exposed to examples of dysfunctional behavior, deprived of opportunities to acquire and maintain coping skills necessary for life-long competence, and bereft of the material and social supports available to youth in more privileged families. These high-risk youth can look forward to lives as bleak as their parents'. They have little chance, given the status quo, of "pulling themselves up by the bootstraps", exiting from the underclass, and yet feeling proud of their racial and ethnic roots.

A method of scoring "underclassness" based on the characteristics of the individual's neighborhood has been proposed by Mincy, Sawhill, and Wolf (1990).

Competence. The competent individual, of any age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic class, is relatively successful compared to peers at three tasks: managing emotions (affective competence), getting along with others (social competence), getting ahead at school or work (achievement competence) (Blechman & Tryon, in press). Comparison to peers is crucial in the measurement of competence. An inner-city third-

grader's achievement competence (assessed by report-card grades and standardized test scores) can only be fairly assessed by comparison with classmates.

Measures of competence are chosen because they not only estimate current success, they also predict future success. Therefore, income alone is not used to assess and adult's achievement competence. Instead, occupational prestige ratings are used to evaluate the source of the adult's income. This means that a drug dealer with no legal, mainstream occupation earning a substantial income would receive a zero score on achievement competence. A man living on the same block, employed as a construction worker, would receive a significantly higher occupational prestige rating, and achievement competence score. The drug dealer, despite his high current income, has a more uncertain chance of sustaining an equally high income throughout his adult years than the construction worker.

Methods of measuring competence have been presented by Blechman, Tryon, McEnroe, and Ruff (1989).

Bicultural competence. A bicultural competence score has two parts: a same-culture score and a different-culture score. First, as is usually the case, the individual's scores on affective, social, and achievement competence are compared to peers (same age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, religion) yielding a same-culture competence score. Next, the individual's competence

scores are compared to people of the same age from a different culture (different on gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, or religion) yielding a different-culture competence score. Bicultural competence involves success relative to members of the same culture and of a different culture. Thus, an inner-city third-grader's achievement competence scores are compared first to classmates from her own neighborhood and then to same-aged girls living in an affluent suburb. The third-grader is biculturally competent if her achievement scores are high relative to both groups.

Bicultural competence is particularly important for youth who begin life as members of the underclass since with bicultural competence they gain the possibility of "having the best of both worlds." The biculturally competent youth gains the freedom to make choices as an adult not readily available to the "street-smart" youth competent only in the underclass culture. Certainly, the street-smart youth is significantly more likely to survive than the youth without street smarts. Yet, the youth who learns to negotiate the underclass culture and the more privileged mainstream culture has the chance of moving out of the inner-city, getting an education, holding down an interesting well-paying job, establishing a stable, supportive family and circle of friends, living a healthy life-style, staying out of jail and psychiatric institutions and off welfare.

Effective communication. Communication (verbal and nonverbal) has three essential, apparently invariant components: information exchange, behavior management, and problem solving (Blechman, 1990a, 1990b). Of these, the most essential is information exchange. During information exchange, people send and receive messages accurately. Speakers get their points across; listeners understand speakers' points of view. Behavior management cannot take place without prior, successful information exchange. During behavior management, people successfully influence one another's behavior without violence or coercion. Problem solving cannot take place without prior, successful information exchange and behavior management. During problem solving, people tackle joint problems in ways that yield mutually agreeable solutions.

Whenever communication is effective, information is exchanged accurately, behavior is influenced successfully and noncoercively, and problems are solved in a mutually agreeable manner. Effective communication has the same ingredients when it takes place among family members, among friends, between therapist and client, or, between mentor and protege. Although different words may be used, effective communication has the same ingredients when it takes place in the underclass culture and in more privileged-class cultures.

When family communication is effective, children learn and rehearse at home invaluable coping skills, useful within the

family, at school, in the neighborhood, on the job, and with people from strikingly different backgrounds. Constantly immersed in effective family communication, children learn to cope successfully with their own feelings (affect management), with their needs (reinforcer management), and with challenges (challenge management). In this way, the child is prepared for successful coping in a variety of settings distant from home, and with diverse people dissimilar to the family. As a result, the child raised in a family characterized by effective communication has a good chance of becoming multiculturally competent.

A method of measuring communication has been described by Dumas and Blechman (1990).

Coping skills. Competence, as defined above, represents the endpoint of an individual's efforts. Thus, a ten-year-old's social competence is measured, on his tenth birthday, by classmates' ratings of how much they would like to spend time with him at school and at play. Peer ratings which give rise to an achievement competence score are the outcome of the ten-year-old's efforts over a school year to make friends with his classmates. The efforts which give rise to competence can be called coping.

There are three goals to which coping strategies can be aimed: affect management, reinforcer management, challenge management. Ten-year-old Juan has to cope with: his feelings (e.g., sadness about not being chosen for a soccer team), his desire for

reinforcers (e.g., his desire for his father's approval), and difficult challenges (e.g., his older brother's constant teasing). Overall competence requires continuing success in all three coping domains.

Blechman, Wills, and Adler have suggested methods of measuring coping (in press).

Enabling Mentors to Promote Bicultural Competence

The social-learning model proposed above has some straightforward implications for selecting, training, and supervising mentors.

Select biculturally competent mentors effective at communication. Prospective mentors should be rigorously screened so that only those individuals who evidence bicultural competence and effective communication are selected. Screening procedures should be objective. The reliability of measurement should be routinely checked.

Make effective communication the watchword of the agency within which the mentors work. Mentors, no matter how effective at communication, will perform suboptimally if the organization within which they work is characterized by dysfunctional communication. Community agencies with high motives and low budgets often disintegrate in response to financial constraints and interpersonal tensions. Under these circumstances, the communication milieu can demoralize paid and unpaid staff and threaten mentors' capacity to

do their jobs well. Budgets for mentoring programs should include funds for as-needed agency-wide conflict resolution and for routine communication skills training.

Get independent estimates of the mentor's impact on the protege. If the goal of mentoring is to promote effective communication and bicultural competence in proteges, independent checks on the proteges' progress seem advisable. Since mentors and colleagues at the mentoring agency are likely to be biased in their judgments of proteges progress, objective measures of competence and communication collected by independent observers and subjected to frequent reliability checks are needed. Probably the greatest problems in mentoring concern continued engagement of high-risk proteges in mentoring relationships. Independent observers should seek out youngsters who have dropped out from mentoring relationships to understand why engagement failed. Interviews with youngsters and their families should be confidential and open to the possibility that mentors were abusive, unreliable, or uncaring. Observers should also interview mentors to get their views about why engagement failed. Interviews with mentors should be confidential and open to the possibility that the mentor's agency failed to support the mentor when difficulties with the protege and family were encountered.

Give mentors training and supervision in effective communication. Although mentors may be generally effective at

communication, high-risk proteges and their families may obstruct the mentor's performance of these skills. Training, supervision, social support, and reinforcement for persistence and results seem essential. Results of the mentor's efforts should be equated with clinically significant improvement on objective indices of protege communication and competence. Mentors who retain proteges in long-term relationships and whose proteges show evident improvements in communication and competence deserve public acknowledgment of their success, special privileges if they are volunteers, pay and status hikes if they mentor for hire.

For families motivated to improve their communication, integrate Family-Skills Training with mentoring. Family Skills Training (FST) is a method of behavioral family therapy designed to achieve two goals at the same time: improve the quality of family communication and resolve the child behavior problems presented by the family. Methods of FST have been described in detailed manual form by Blechman (1985). FST procedures have been developed so that they are suitable for multi-problem families with high-risk children. FST (and other modes of family therapy) are typically provided at mental-health outpatient clinics.

The family's generalization of new skills from the clinic to the home and community is often obstructed by the gap between the clinic and the community. The people who provide treatment in the clinic typically do not live in the neighborhoods where multi-

problem families dwell; often these treatment providers are unfamiliar with the culture of origin of the multi-problem family. In other words, providers of family therapy are rarely biculturally competent.

A biculturally competent mentor, effective at communication, could help solve the generalization problem. Given the mentor's communication talents, mentors might spend time with the whole family (in addition to the time they allocate for the protege alone). During family time, the mentor might use social-learning principles (particularly modeling and reinforcement) to encourage the entire family to practice skills they are acquiring via Family Skills Training. During family time, the mentor might encourage the family to talk about their achievements in Family Skills Training (less pushing and shoving during family arguments), the mentor might help the family view these achievements as congruent with the family's culture of origin (showing respect for each other). During the time the mentor spends alone with the protege, the mentor might encourage the protege to talk about personal achievements in Family Skills Training ("I'm learning to keep my cool when mom nags.") and to consider future personal goals for Family Skills Training ("Keeping my cool when my brother teases me.") From time to time, the mentor might (at the family's invitation), take part in a Family Skills Training session (e.g., dealing with temper tantrums), and assist the family in rehearsing relevant skills at

home (e.g., time-out).

When a mentoring program is structured so that mentors serve two functions, mentor for the protege, and community liasion between Family Skills Training staff and the family, consideration might be given to the employ of mature women as mentors to male and female proteges. There is no empirical evidence about the utility of a mentor as a community liasion for Family Skills Training nor is there evidence about the importance of a same-sex (or same-race or close-age) match between protege and mentor. Future research on mentoring might benefit the field by exploring these two questions together.

When children have school achievement problems, integrate the classroom achievement system with mentoring. The Classroom Achievement System (CAS) is a method of classroom teaching which allows the teacher, using any curriculum, to promote good classroom behavior and to facilitate children's achievement of academic goals. Methods for CAS have been described by Blechman (1985). CAS procedures are suitable for high-risk youth with substantial behavior problems and deficient academic achievement. CAS is most successful when administered classroom-wide.

A major shortcoming of CAS is a poor fit between achievement skills acquired via CAS and the values children learn about at home and in the community. High-risk, minority children often encounter the message that school achievement is equivalent to "acting white"

and betraying the child's culture of origin. When this clash of values occurs over and over, an intervention like CAS has very little chance of success since the child is punished away from school for achieving at school.

A biculturally competent mentor could help solve the value clash problem. Given the mentor's communication skills, the mentor could encourage information exchange with the protege about the value of formal education and about the value of knowledge about the world. In this exchange, the protege would have repeated opportunities to expand on the themes of "why it is good for me to be educated and excel at reading, math, history, geography, and science" and "why it is good for my family and my people if I become educated and excel at school."

The mentor could also become an integral part of the Classroom Achievement System. This system has two parts, the Home Note System and the Good Behavior Game. In the Home Note System, the student receives a Good News Note at the end of each school day when achievement in math and reading is at or above the child's goal (average attainment during presystem baseline). Students take home their Good News Notes to inform their parents about their achievements and to trade the notes in for prearranged rewards (e.g., baking cookies with mother after school). Once the Home Note System is instituted, teachers no longer contact parents when children perform poorly or when their behavior is unacceptable;

they contact parents only via the Good News Notes to inform parents about children's success. There is substantial evidence indicating the success of this system as a means of improving classroom behavior and achievement. In multi-problem families, however, students may not be regularly rewarded when they bring Good News Notes home. Parents may lack access to rewarding consequences or they may be too disorganized to act consistently and contingently.

Mentors can serve a key role in maintaining the Home Note System, collecting the Good News Notes and providing proteges with contingent reinforcement on a prearranged, contractual basis. (For example, "When we meet on Saturday, if you have three Good News Notes for the week, I'll take you to the movie of your choice in addition to what we usually do."

A second component of the Classroom Achievement System, is the Good Behavior Game. In the Good Behavior Game, teachers reward children on a daily basis for adhering to the classroom's rules (e.g., raising a hand and waiting for teacher acknowledgment before speaking). The mentor can facilitate the child's understanding of the Good Behavior Game by visiting the classroom, gaining a grasp of the classroom rules, and talking these rules over frequently with the protege. Mentor and protege might discuss why these rules are important, how the protege and the rest of the class benefit from following these rules, how these rules apply to situations at home and in the community as well as in the classroom.

While it seems that a mentor might boost the generalization and maintenance effects of the Classroom Achievement System, relevant evidence is unavailable. Future research on mentoring might profitably address this question.

When children are aggressive or withdrawn, integrate peer communication training with mentoring. Peer Communication Training (PCT) is a curriculum for elementary-school students that teaches effective communication with peers (Blechman, Prinz, Dumas, 1990). Peer Communication Training has been designed with high-risk, socially unskilled children in mind. Particular consideration has been given in Peer Communication Training to the plight of minority children in the inner city.

Peer Communication Training teaches children in groups to use basic communication skills (information exchange, behavior management, problem solving) as strategies for coping with key affective, social, and achievement challenges (e.g., fear, peer group entry, teacher evaluation). In the process, children learn to give and receive social support from peers. Since Peer Communication Training groups are composed of children with differing competence levels from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, opportunities abound to learn empathy for others' difficulties and tolerance and respect for people different from one's self. While Peer Communication Training is primarily designed to prevent conduct problems and associated psychological

dysfunction (such as depression and anxiety) in high-risk youngsters, Peer Communication Training routinely involves competent children and provides them with an opportunity to improve communication, empathy, tolerance, and respect.

The Peer Communication Training curriculum involves 8 children once a week for 16 weeks in a 45-minute communication-training session outside the classroom. The children are selected so that they always come from differing ability levels and cultural backgrounds. Children learn to send and receive messages accurately, to control themselves and persuade each other with words (not fists), to solve mutual problems collaboratively and nonviolently. Equipped with better communication skills, by the end of the course, children will generally know how to make and keep friends and how to behave more appropriately with peers at school and at home. These new skills could contribute to better achievement at school and to greater respect for children from different backgrounds.

The group leader who provides Peer Communication Training will not always come from the same subculture as minority participants. While the group leader can prepare minority participants for better coping in the majority culture, the group leader cannot always insure that minority children continue to function in a street-smart manner in their home cultures. This is only one example of problems in generalization of Peer Communication Training effects

from the training setting to the child's home and neighborhood. A mentor could serve as a bridge for generalization between the two settings.

Mentors could have a variety of relationships with the Peer Communication Training group. A mentor might become familiar with the goals of the group, making it easier for the mentor to encourage the protege's progress in the group. A mentor might visit the group and take part in the role-play exercises, demonstrating competent ways of dealing with difficult challenges (e.g., how to deal with a neighborhood bully in a street-smart but nonviolent manner). A mentor might become versed in methods of actively shaping communication (like those used in the group), applying these methods in the mentor-protege relationship. Finally, a mentor might become trained as a Peer Communication group leader reducing generalization problems to a minimum.

While it seems that a mentor might boost the generalization and maintenance effects of Peer Communication Training, relevant evidence is unavailable. Future research on mentoring might profitably explore this question.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper presents a social-learning model of the mentoring process. Bicultural competence and effective communication are essential features of this model. The paper suggests how mentors can cooperate with families and teachers in the promotion of high-

risk minority children's bicultural competence.

These are the social learning model's seven assumptions. 1. Effective communication is a universal human process. 2. Coping and competence depend upon effective communication. 3. Effective communication promotes bicultural competence. 4. Bicultural competence is empowering. 5. Effective communication can be learned. 6. Effective communication is a requirement for all helping relationships. 7. Multi-problem families and their children are most likely to learn effective communication from biculturally competent mentors.

These are seven recommendations derived from the social learning model. 1. Select biculturally competent mentors effective at communication. 2. Make effective communication the watchword of the agency within which the mentors work. 3. Get independent estimates of the mentor's impact on the protege. 4. Give mentors training and supervision in effective communication. 5. For families motivated to improve their communication, integrate Family-Skills Training with mentoring. 6. When children have school achievement problems, integrate the classroom achievement system with mentoring. 7. When children are aggressive or withdrawn, integrate peer communication training with mentoring.

There is reason to believe that the combination of mentoring with the Classroom Achievement System, with Family Skills Training, or with Peer Communication Training would lead to enhanced

generalization and maintenance of skills. Future research on mentoring might profit from testing these assumptions.

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